

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, of 15-29 Tsukamoto, 3-chome, Yodogawa-ku, Osaka 532-0026, JAPAN, hereby certify that I am well acquainted with the English and Japanese languages, and that the attached document is a true English translation of the attached Japanese-language document.

I declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true, that all statements on information and belief are believed to be true.

Signature:

Natsuko Honjo

Dated: 1104 24, 2003

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PETITION FOR TENT/UTILITY MODEL APPLICATION

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Creator	Akihiko Ishibashi MAN-	No. 3912164		RBF1	7.6	7-621-2752 06-6906-2421				06-6906-8100		
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REPORT

Draft Date September 27, 1999

TO:

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Requesting Factory

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Application Type Title of the Invention

Abstract

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Patent H11-1012

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normal

Method for Fabricating Nitride Semiconductor Device

Vapor phase epitaxial growth of nitride in which crystal quality is improved by pressure change between pressures higher and

lower than the atmospheric pressure.

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1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 10

Reason;

Date of Publication

Request for Examination

NO

Foreign Application

To be filed

Administration of ABC

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Co-applicant & Contact

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Remark

None

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None NO

> RECEIVED September 29, 1999 **IP Division**

ASSIGNMENT

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The oversigned hereby do assign the right of obtaining a patent for the following invention or device or the right of obtaining registration of utility model or design.

Remark

Article relating to the title of the invention or device or design Method for Fabricating Nitride Semiconductor Device

(sealed)

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SENTANHANDO

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[Name of Document] Specification

[Title of the Invention] Method for Fabricating Nitride Semiconductor

Device

[Claims]

[Claim 1] A method for fabricating a nitride semiconductor device in which nitride semiconductor layers are laminated on a substrate, characterized by comprising the step of, between any steps of respectively laminating nitride semiconductor layers, changing a growth ambient pressure from a first growth ambient pressure to a second growth ambient pressure.

[Claim 2] A method for fabricating a nitride semiconductor device according to Claim 1, wherein the first growth ambient pressure is a pressure lower than the atmospheric pressure and the second growth ambient pressure is a pressure higher than the atmospheric pressure, or the second growth ambient pressure is a pressure higher than the atmospheric pressure and the second growth ambient pressure is a pressure lower than the atmospheric pressure.

[Claim 3] A method for fabricating a nitride semiconductor device according to Claim 2, wherein a nitride semiconductor layer grown under the pressure higher than the atmospheric pressure includes In.

[Claim 4] A method for fabricating a nitride semiconductor device according to Claim 2, wherein a nitride semiconductor layer grown under the pressure lower than the atmospheric pressure includes at least Al or Mg.

[Claim 5] A method for fabricating a nitride semiconductor device according to any one of Claims 1 to 3, wherein an active region serves as an active layer of a semiconductor light emitting device and composed of a quantum well.

[Claim 6] A method for fabricating a nitride semiconductor device in which nitride

semiconductor layers are laminated on a substrate, characterized by comprising the steps of depositing a nitride semiconductor layer under a first ambient pressure on a substrate selectively masked on a nitride semiconductor layer or on a substrate selectively having a seed crystal of a nitride semiconductor; and depositing a nitride semiconductor layer under a second ambient pressure on the upper portion of the substrate.

[Claim 7] A method for fabricating a nitride semiconductor device according to claim 1, wherein the first growth ambient pressure is a pressure lower than the atmospheric pressure.

[Claim 8] A method for fabricating a nitride semiconductor device according to Claim 4, characterized by further comprising the steps of depositing a nitride semiconductor layer at a first temperature on a substrate selectively masked on a nitride semiconductor layer or on a substrate selectively having a seed crystal of a nitride semiconductor; and depositing a nitride semiconductor layer at a second temperature on the upper portion of the substrate.

[Claim 9] A method for fabricating a nitride semiconductor device according to Claim 6, wherein the second temperature is set higher than the first temperature.

[Claim 10] A method for fabricating a nitride semiconductor device according to Claim 6, wherein the nitride semiconductor layer deposited on the substrate selectively having a seed crystal is made from AlGaN (1>Al>0).

[Technical Field That the Invention Belongs to]

The present invention relates to a GaN-based semiconductor light emitting device such as a semiconductor laser expected to be applied to the filed of optical information processing, and a method for fabricating the same.

[Prior Art]

Recently, a nitride semiconductor including nitride (N) as a group V element is regarded as a promising material for a short-wavelength light emitting device because of its large energy gap. In particular, a gallium nitride-based compound semiconductor (gallium nitride-based semiconductor: $Al_xGa_yIn_zN$, wherein $0 \le x$, y, $z \le 1$ and x + y + z = 1) has been earnestly studied and developed, resulting in realizing a practical blue or green light emitting diode (LED) device. Furthermore, in accordance with capacity increase of an optical disk unit, a semiconductor laser diode lasing at a wavelength of approximately 400 nm is earnestly desired, and a semiconductor laser diode using a GaN-based semiconductor is focused and to be practically used.

FIG. **8** shows the sectional structure of a conventional GaN-based semiconductor laser diode showing laser action. The conventional semiconductor laser diode includes a buffer layer **802** of GaN, an n-type layer **803** of n-type GaN, a first cladding layer **804** of n-type $Al_{0.07}Ga_{0.93}N$, a first light guiding layer **805** of n-type GaN, a multiple quantum well active layer **806** including $Ga_{1-x}In_xN/Ga_{1-y}In_yN$ (wherein 0 < y < x < 1), a second light guiding layer **807** of P-type GaN, a second cladding layer **808** of p-type $Al_{0.07}Ga_{0.93}N$ and a contact layer **809** of p-type GaN successively formed on a substrate **801** of sapphire by metal organic vapor phase epitaxial growth (MOVPE). A ridge stripe **810** with a width of approximately 3 through 10μ m is formed on the contact layer **809** of p-type GaN, and then, both sides thereof are buried with an insulating film **811**. Then, a p-side electrode **812** of, for example, Ni/Au is formed on the ridge **810** and the insulating film **811**, and an n-side electrode **813** of, for example, Ti/Al is formed on the surface of the exposed portion of the etched n-type layer **803** of n-type GaN. In the semiconductor laser diode having the aforementioned structure,

when a voltage is applied to the p-side electrode 812 with the n-side electrode 813 grounded, holes are introduced from the p-side electrode 812 and electrons are introduced from the n-side electrode 813 into the multiple quantum well active layer 806. As a result, optical gain is generated within the multiple quantum well active layer 806, so as to show laser action at a wavelength of approximately 400 nm. The wavelength of the laser action depends upon the composition ratios x and y or the thicknesses of the $Ga_{1-x}In_xN/Ga_{1-y}In_yN$ thin film included in the multiple quantum well active layer 806. At present, the semiconductor laser diode having this structure has been developed to show continuous laser action at room temperature or more.

It is reported that, in growing a semiconductor of GaInN, nitrogen is preferably used as a carrier gas with the growth temperature for the semiconductor set to approximately 800°C (Applied Physics Letters, Vol. 59, p. 2251, 1991). On the other hand, it is also general that cladding layers of Al_{0.07}Ga_{0.93}N and light guiding layers of GaN are preferably grown at a growth temperature of 1000°C or more with hydrogen The fabrication processes for these semiconductor layers are used as a carrier gas. disclosed in, for example, Japanese Laid-Open Patent Publication No. 6-196757 or 6-177423. First, with hydrogen introduced onto a substrate 801 of sapphire, the substrate 301 is subjected to a heat treatment at a temperature of approximately 1050°C. Then, after lowering the substrate temperature to approximately 510°C, ammonia (NH₃) and trimethylgallium (TMG) are introduced onto the substrate 801, so as to grow a buffer layer 802 of GaN. After growing the buffer layer 802, the introduction of TMG is stopped, the substrate temperature is increased to approximately 1030°C, and TMG and monosilane (SiH₄) are introduced onto the substrate 801 with hydrogen used as a carrier gas, thereby successively growing an n-type layer of GaN and an n-type layer of n-type AlGaN, whereas trimethylaluminum (TMA) or TMG is introduced as a group III material gas in growing the AlGaN layer. Next, the introduction of the material gases is stopped, the substrate temperature is lowered to approximately 800°C, and the carrier Subsequently, trimethylindium (TMI) and TMG are gas is changed to nitrogen. introduced onto the substrate 801 as the group III material gases, thereby growing a Ga₁-_xIn_xN/Ga_{1-y}In_yN thin film (multiple quantum well active layer 706). After glowing the multiple quantum well active layer 806, the introduction of the group III material gases is stopped, the substrate temperature is increased again to approximately 1020°C, and TMG, TMA and cyclopentadienylmagnesium (Cp₂Mg) and the like are introduced onto the substrate 801, thereby successively growing a p-type AlGaN layer and a p-type GaN As a protection film in increasing the temperature to 1020°C after growing the Ga_{1-x}In_xN/Ga_{1-y}In_yN thin film, a layer of GaN may be formed according to the description of Japanese Laid-Open Patent Publication No. 9-186363 or a layer of Al_{0.2}Ga_{0.8}N may be formed according to description of, for example, Japanese Journal of Applied Physics (Vol. 35, p. L74, 1996). In general, the vapor phase epitaxial growth is conducted in an atmosphere of reduced pressure lower than the atmospheric pressure, the atmospheric pressure or increased pressure of approximately 1 through 1.5 atm.

A technique to suppress defects from occurring on an interface between a substrate and GaN by growing GaN on a substrate of sapphire by selective growth or the like is recently tried. It is reported with respect to this technique that GaN with a flat face and high crystal quality can be obtained by conducting vapor phase epitaxial growth under reduced pressure in particular.

[Problems that the Invention is to Solve]

As a characteristic of growth of a semiconductor of this kind of material,

different carrier gases are used in growing a layer including In, namely, the multiple quantum well active layer 806, and layers not including indium (GaN, AlGaN) and the like. In general, nitrogen is used for growing the former layer and hydrogen is used for growing the latter layers. Accordingly, in the fabrication of a semiconductor laser diode, particularly in forming a multilayer structure, it is necessary to change the carrier gas in the middle of the fabrication. Also, the substrate temperature is changed at the same time. In changing the carrier gas, the introduction of the group III material gases is stopped, and the wafer is placed in an equilibrium state where no crystal grows. However, the grown semiconductor layer is exposed to a high temperature of approximately 1000°C or reduced pressure lower than 1 atm while the substrate is placed in the equilibrium state. As a result, there arises a problem that constituent elements are released (re-evaporated) from the grown layer. In particular, quality degradation of n-GaN and n-AlGaN (composition ratio of Al is 0.1 in Japanese Laid-Open Patent Publication No. 6-196757 and 6-177423) formed below the multiple quantum well active layer 806 before growing leads to quality degradation of the multiple quantum well active layer 706. This degradation results in lowering the luminous efficiency and increasing a threshold current of the resultant light emitting diode or semiconductor laser diode.

Furthermore, when a nitride semiconductor is grown under increased pressure exceeding the atmospheric pressure in the vapor phase growth, the concentration of material gases is so increased that vapor phase reactions of NH₃ with TMA and Cp₂Mg are caused. Accordingly, the material gases cannot be efficiently supplied onto the substrate, resulting in extremely lowering the growth rate or preventing Mg, that is, the p-type dopant, from being introduced. Furthermore, when the flow amount of a carrier gas for carrying the material gases is increased to accelerate the flow rate for solving

this problem, the amount of gases flowing through a reaction tube is so large that vortexes and convections are caused in the air flow within the reaction tube. As a result, the crystal cannot be grown under stable conditions.

In consideration of the aforementioned conventional problems, an object of the invention is to provide a nitride semiconductor device having excellent characteristics by improving the crystal quality, particularly the crystal quality of an active region and the vicinity of a nitride semiconductor device and reducing defects thereof, and particularly to enable improvement of the luminous efficiency of a light emitting diode.

[Means of Solving the Problem]

In a method for fabricating a nitride semiconductor device according to the present invention in which nitride semiconductor layers are laminated on a substrate, is characterized by comprising the step of, between any steps of respectively laminating nitride semiconductor layers, changing a growth ambient pressure from a first growth ambient pressure to a second growth ambient pressure. Optimal growth ambient pressures can be set in accordance with the growth of the respective layers, so that crystal dislocations can be reduced, the nitride semiconductor layers can be efficiently doped, and a semiconductor crystal of an active layer can be improved in the quality. Especially, when the active layer including at least In is grown under increased pressure higher than the atmospheric pressure and the other layers are grown under reduced pressure lower than the atmospheric pressure, an intermediate reaction in a vapor phase between materials can be suppressed without increasing the flow rates of material gases, resulting in efficient and stable crystal growth in structure of a nitride semiconductor device.

Further, a method for fabricating a nitride semiconductor device according to

the present invention is characterized by including the steps of: depositing an active layer including In and a nitride semiconductor layer not including In under a first ambient pressure; and changing the first growth ambient pressure to a second ambient pressure after depositing the nitride semiconductor layer not including In.

Further, a method for fabricating a nitride semiconductor device according to the present invention is characterized by including the steps of: depositing a nitride semiconductor layer under a first ambient pressure on a substrate selectively masked on a nitride semiconductor layer or on a substrate selectively having a seed crystal of a nitride semiconductor; and depositing a nitride semiconductor layer under a second ambient pressure on the upper portion of the substrate. Especially, when the nitride semiconductor layer is grown under reduced pressure lower than the atmospheric pressure as the first ambient pressure, the nitride semiconductor layer is grown particularly in the lateral direction so that the nitride semiconductor layer with a flat face is formed on the mask and over the entirety of the substrate together. Further, appropriate change of the second ambient pressure from the reduced pressure to increased pressure higher than the atmospheric pressure enables formation of a high quality nitride semiconductor device on an underlying nitride semiconductor layer having few defects.

Moreover, a method for fabricating a nitride semiconductor device according to the present invention is characterized by including the steps of: depositing a nitride semiconductor layer at a first growth temperature on a substrate selectively masked on a nitride semiconductor layer or on a substrate selectively having a seed crystal of a nitride semiconductor; and depositing a nitride semiconductor layer at a second growth temperature on the upper portion of the substrate.

Particularly, when the second temperature is set higher than the first

temperature, a high-quality nitride semiconductor device with improved crystal orientation can be formed on a flat underlying nitride semiconductor layer having fewer defects.

[Embodiment of the Invention]

Hereinafter, embodiments of the present invention will be described in detail with reference to accompanying drawings. The fabrication method according to the present invention is not limited to a method for growing a nitride semiconductor by metal organic vapor phase epitxty (MOVPE) and is applicable to any methods ever proposed for growing a nitride semiconductor layer such as a hydride vapor phase epitaxial growth (H-VPE), molecular beam epitaxial growth (MBE), and the like. (Working Example 1)

FIG. 1 is each sectional view for showing procedures in a method for fabricating a GaN-based semiconductor laser diode of Working Example 1.

First, as is shown in FIG. 1(a), with a growth temperature set to approximately 500°C, TMG and NH₃ are introduced onto a substrate 101 of sapphire by MOVPE, so as to form a buffer layer 102. Then, after the substrate temperature is increased to approximately 1020°C, TMG, SiH₄, TMA and the like are introduced so as to successively grow a contact layer 103 of n-type GaN, a cladding layer 104 of n-type Al_{0.1}Ga_{0.9}N, a light guiding layer 105 of n-type GaN and a n-type layer 106 of n-type Al_{0.2}Ga_{0.8}N. In this case, hydrogen is mainly used as a carrier gas and a growth ambient pressure is set to approximately 300 Torr (approximately 0.4 atm). Next, the introduction of the group III material gases is stopped, the growth ambient pressure is changed to increased pressure of approximately 840 Torr, the growth temperature is lowered to approximately 780°C and the carrier gas is changed to nitrogen. Then, as is

shown in FIG. 2(b), TMG and SiH₄ are introduced, so as to grow a n-type layer 107 of n-type GaN and TMI and TMG are introduced, so as to grow an active layer 108. After growing the active layer 108, as is shown in FIG. 1(c), TMG, TMA and Cp₂Mg and the like are introduced while increasing the growth temperature to approximately 1020°C, so as to grow an evaporation suppressing layer 109 of p-type AlGaN for suppressing evaporation in the active layer. Thereafter, the introduction of the group III material gases is stopped and the growth ambient pressure is set again to reduced pressure of approximately 400 Torr, so as to successively grow a light guiding layer 110 of p-type GaN, a cladding layer 111 of p-type Al_{0.1}Ga_{0.9}N and a p-type contact layer 112 The active layer 108 is composed of AlGaInN-based multiple of p-type GaN. quantum well, wherein the multiple quantum well structure is employed in this embodiment which includes three cycles of a well layer of In_{0.09}Ga_{0.91}N with a thickness of approximately 3 nm and a barrier layer of In_{0.0.1}Ga_{0.99}N with a thickness of approximately 6 nm. Further, a dopant such as Si may be added to the active layer 108. The carrier gas used at 780°C may be an inert gas such as argon. In addition, the substrate may be made from SiC or Si instead of sapphire.

FIG. 2 schematically shows the aforementioned pressure variable MOVPE system. Stainless, quartz or the like is used as a material. A group III material and a group V material are independently supplied and mixed immediately before a substrate. A sub-flow gas such as nitrogen, hydrogen or an inert gas such as argon is introduced in parallel with the material gases for suppressing the material gasses from blowing up above the substrate due to a convection or the like. The substrate is heated by a heater 202 of an electric heater pair 201. In the exhaust system, a conductance valve 208 for adjusting the opening is inserted between a rotary pump 209 and a reaction pipe 206. In association with the operation of a pressure gauge 207, which monitors the pressure

of the reaction pipe 206, the conductance valve 208 adjusts the opening or the like to change and maintain the growth ambient pressure from reduced pressure to the atmospheric pressure or to increased pressure up to several atm.

After growing the crystals, as is shown in the section of the GaN-base semiconductor laser diode of FIG. 3, the contact layer 112 of p-type GaN and the cladding layer 111 of p-type Al_{0.1}Ga_{0.9}N are formed into a ridge stripe with a width of approximately 5 µm and both sides thereof are buried with SiO₂ 301. Thereafter, a p-side electrode 302 is formed on the contact layer 112 of p-type GaN. An n-side electrode 303 is also formed on the surface of the exposed portion of the etched contact layer 103 of n-type GaN. In the present device, when a voltage is applied between the n-side electrode 303 and the p-side electrode 302, holes and electrons are injected respectively from the p-side electrode 302 and the n-side electrode 303 into the active layer 108, so as to generate optical gain within the active layer 108, resulting in showing laser action at a wavelength of approximately 405 nm.

The effectiveness of the pressure variable MOVPE system will be explained next.

FIG. 4(a) shows the relationship between the growth rate of AlGaN and the growth ambient pressure. It is found that, the growth rate is extremely lowered as the growth ambient pressure increases. As well, as is shown in FIG. 4(b), it is also found that Mg is captured and the concentration thereof is largely lowered as the growth ambient pressure increases according to the dependency of the growth ambient pressure on the concentration of Mg in p-type GaN. This is probably because the probability of collision between the materials is increased in a vapor phase when the growth ambient pressure is high, and in particular, an intermediate reaction is caused between TMA and NH₃ or between Cp₂Mg and NH₃, so that the materials cannot be efficiently supplied

onto the substrate. The dependency of concentration of Mg in AlGaN on the growth ambient pressure is shown in FIG. 4(c). It is found that Mg is captured and the concentration thereof is more largely lowered as the growth ambient pressure increases than that in GaN. Accordingly, it is understood that reduced pressure lower than the atmospheric pressure is effective for growing p-type AlGaN.

On the other hand, it is considered that an AlInGaN-based semiconductor is efficiently grown at a low temperature or under high growth ambient pressure for suppressing evaporation because InN has such a high vapor pressure that it is necessary to suppress defects due to release of nitrogen. Accordingly, an AlInGaN-based semiconductor is conventionally generally grown by atmospheric MOVPE conducted under the atmospheric pressure and is sometimes grown by increased pressure MOVPE. In the conventional atmospheric MOVPE and the increased pressure MOVPE, however, the growth ambient pressure is always set to a fixed value, and there has been no disclosure of a growth method in which high crystal quality is maintained in an AlInGaN-based active layer and the growth ambient pressure is changed in growing p-type GaN and p-type AlGaN for suppressing the vapor phase intermediate reaction as described above.

Now, in order to suppress the intermediate reaction under increased pressure of approximately 840 Torr, a semiconductor layer is grown for the purpose of reducing the probability of collision between the materials by lowering the concentrations of the material gases under the condition that the flow rate of hydrogen or nitrogen serving as a carrier gas for a group III material is increased. As is shown in FIG. 5, when the total flow rate is approximately 40 slm and a vapor phase intermediate reaction occurs, the growth rate of GaN is substantially constant and stable through repeated growth. In contrast, when the total flow rate exceeds 40 slm, the flow rate is so high that the

growth rate is lowered because the efficiency of thermal decomposition of the materials is lowered or that the air flow is unstably changed due to vortexes or a small amount of reaction product generated therein. As a result, the growth rate becomes more and more unstable through repeated growth.

Therefore, when the pressure variable MOVPE is employed as in the present invention, an active layer including In is grown under increased pressure, so as to reduce defects resulting from holes from which nitrogen has been released, and the layers other than the active layer is grown under reduced pressure, so as to suppress the vapor phase intermediate reaction. As a result, crystals of the nitride semiconductor device can be stably and highly efficiently grown.

After the In-based active layer is grown and before the guiding layer of p-type GaN and the cladding layer of p-type AlGaN are grown under reduced pressure at a temperature higher than that for the active layer, p-type AlGaN is grown under the same pressure as that for growing the active layer while increasing the temperature higher than the growth temperature for the active layer. This is because it is necessary to prevent the quality degradation through decomposition of InN in the active layer during the temperature increase. When the growth rate is sufficiently small, for example, approximately 1 nm/min., Mg-doped p-type AlGaN can be grown which can function as an evaporation suppressing layer against the active layer. When the active layer including In is entirely covered with p-type AlGaN, the active layer can be free from damage even if the growth ambient pressure is changed from the increased pressure to reduced pressure and the carrier gas seed is changed from nitrogen to hydrogen.

The semiconductor laser diode thus fabricated by this method of the present invention has a threshold current of approximately 1/2 as small as that of a conventional laser diode.

Although the active layer is grown under increased pressure and the semiconductor layers other than the active layer are grown under reduced pressure in this invention, the semiconductor layers other than the p-type layer of p-type GaN and a p-type layer of p-type AlGaN may be grown under pressure equivalent to or higher than the atmospheric pressure. This is because the vapor phase intermediate reaction is substantially negligible. Furthermore, in changing the growth ambient pressure, there is no need to always stop the growth as in the present working exmaple but a subsequent layer may be continuously grown by lowering the growth rate by, for example, reducing the supply amount of the group III material.

Furthermore, although the method for fabricating a GaN-based semiconductor laser diode is described in this invention, the method is also very effective in growing an active region of a light emitting diode device or an electronic device. The luminous efficiency can be improved in a light emitting diode device, and the mobility of carriers can be largely increased in an electronic device.

(Working Example 2)

In Working Example 1, in order to improve the crystal quality of an active layer and suppress vapor phase intermediate reaction between materials, the method is described in which the growth ambient pressure is changed during the growth of the vicinity of the active layer. Herein, another method for improving the quality of the active layer will be described.

As is shown in FIG. 6, a ridge stripe 602 of GaN is selectively formed on a substrate 601 of sapphire and a n-type layer 603 of n-type AlGaN and a cladding layer 604 of n-type AlGaN are formed using the ridge stripe 602 as a seed crystal. The crystal growth by MOVPE and materials used herein are the same as those in Working

Emxaple 1. Wherein, the growth ambient pressure is set to reduced pressure of approximately 100 Torr and the growth temperature for the n-type layer 603 of n-type AlGaN and the cladding layer 604 of n-type AlGaN are respectively set to approximately 950°C and 1050°C. It is verified by an experiment that when the layer 603 of AlGaN is grown using the ridge stripe as a seed crystal, it is effective in uniformly growing the layer in the lateral direction (parallel to the surface of the substrate) from the seed crystal to set the growth temperature low for collecting the material around the seed on the substrate while setting the growth ambient pressure to reduced pressure (approximately 400 Torr) for suppressing collision between materials. Further, since the layer of AlGaN grown at the low temperature is poor in the crystallinity such as the C-axis orientation, the crystallinity of n-type layer of n-type AlGaN can be improved when the cladding layer 604 of n-type AlGaN is grown at a growth temperature higher than that for the layer of AlGaN by approximately 100°C.

The surface is etched using an etchant including phosphoric acid/sulfuric acid and the etch pit density of the etched surface is observed. Thus, it is confirmed that defects in the entirety of the etched surface portion is reduced by approximately two figures as compared with that in the n-type AlGaN grown on the sapphire by a conventional method. Although the substrate is made from sapphire in this inveniton, the substrate may be made from SiC or Si instead of sapphire. In addition, the ridge strip of GaN may include Al or In because it can serve as a seed crystal of the layer of AlGaN.

Next, similar to Working Exmaple 1, sequentially formed are a guiding layer 605 of n-type GaN, a multiple quantum well active layer 606 of InGaN/InGaN, an evaporation suppressing layer 607 of p-type AlGaN, a guiding layer 608 of p-type GaN, a cladding layer 609 of p-type AlGaN and a contact layer 610 of p-type GaN. Then, the

p-type layers are formed into a ridge and current pinch is performed using an insulating film 613. Finally, an anode 611 and a cathode 612 are formed. The growth ambient pressure is changed, as in Working Example 1, immediately before growing the InGaN/InGaN multiple quantum well active layer 606, to approximately 840 Torr, then is changed again to reduced pressure of approximately 400 Torr after growing the evaporation suppressing layer 607 of p-type AlGaN.

The present Working Example describes the case where the active layer is grown under increased pressure and the other layers are grown under reduced pressure. However, the layers other than p-type GaN and p-type AlGaN may be grown under a pressure equivalent to or higher than the atmospheric pressure as in Working Example 1.

As in the present invention, the change in growth ambient pressure between reduced pressure and increased pressure results in fabrication of a high-quality InGaN-based multiple quantum well on a cladding layer of n-type AlGaN having less defect density and in efficient and stable growth of p-type AlGaN and p-type GaN layers by suppressing the vapor phase intermediate reaction.

In the semiconductor laser diode thus fabricated under increased pressure according to the fabrication method of present invention, the threshold current thereof can be reduced to approximately 1/2. Furthermore, the present laser diode can be continuously operated at room temperature for more than 10000 hours, and it is thus confirmed that the life can be remarkably improved.

Although the present invention exemplifies a GaN-based semiconductor laser diode, the present invention is, of course, very effective in growing an active region of a light emitting diode device, an electronic device and the like. The luminous efficiency can be improved in a light emitting diode device, and the mobility of carries in an active layer can be largely increased in an electronic device.

[Effects of the Invention]

As described above, in the method for fabricating a nitride semiconductor device according to the present invention, since the active layer including In and the layers including Al and Mg are respectively deposited under increased pressure and reduced pressure, the crystal quality of the active layer is remarkably improved and the vapor phase intermediate reaction, which invites lowering of material efficiency and unstable growth rate in growing p-type layers, is suppressed, resulting in improvement in device characteristic of a light emitting diode device, a semiconductor laser diode, and the like.

In addition, in the method of fabricating a nitride semiconductor device according to the present invention, selective growth is performed by changing the growth ambient pressure between reduced pressure and increased pressure while using a substrate having a ridge stripe of GaN, so that a high-quality active layer including In can be formed on the layer of AlGaN having few defects. Thus, the device characteristics of a light emitting diode device, a semiconductor laser diode and the like are improved.

[Brief Description of the Drawings]

- FIG. 1 cross-sectional views for showing procedures in a method for fabricating a GaN-based semiconductor laser diode according to Working Exmaple 1 of the present invention;
- FIG. 2 a schematic view of a MOVPE system used in Working Exmaples 1 and 2 of the present invention;
- FIG. 3 a cross-sectional view for showing a GaN-based semiconductor laser

diode of Working Example 1 of the present invention;

- FIG. 4 graphs showing the effect obtained by changing growth ambient pressure in Working Examples 1 and 2 of the present invention;
- FIG. 5 a graph showing the relationship between the total flow rate and the growth rate in Working Examples 1 and 2 of the present invention;
- FIG. 6 a cross-sectional view for showing one procedure in a method for fabricating a GaN-based semiconductor laser diode according to Working Exmpale 2 of the invention;
- FIG. 7 a cross-sectional view for showing a GaN-based semiconductor laser diode of Working Exmaple 1 and 2 of the present invention; and
- FIG. 8 a cross-sectional view for showing a conventional semiconductor laser diode having a quantum well of GaN.

[Explanation of Reference Numerals]

- 101 substrate of sapphire
- buffer layer
- 103 contact layer of n-type GaN
- 104 cladding layer of n-type Al_{0.1}Ga_{0.9}N
- light guiding layer of n-type GaN
- n-type layer of n-type Al_{0.2}Ga_{0.8}N
- n-type layer of n-type GaN
- 108 active layer
- 109 evaporation suppressing layer of p-type AlGaN
- light guiding layer of p-type GaN
- cladding layer of p-type Al_{0.1}Ga_{0.9}N

112	contact layer of p-type GaN
201	electric heater pair
202	heater
203	substrate
204	susceptor
205	material gas supplying nozzle
206	reaction chamber
207	pressure gauge
208	conductance valve
209	rotary pump
210	exhaust gas processing system
301	SiO ₂
302	p-side electrode
303	n-side electrode
601	substrate of sapphire
602	ridge strip of GaN
603	n-type layer of n-type AlGaN
604	cladding layer of n-type AlGaN
605	guiding layer of n-type GaN
606	multiple quantum well active layer of InGaN/InGaN
607	evaporation suppressing layer of p-type Al _{0.1} Ga _{0.9} N
608	guiding layer of p-type GaN
609	cladding layer of p-type Al _{0.07} Ga _{0.9.3} N
610	contact layer of p-type GaN
611	anode

612	cathode
613	insulating film
801	substrate of sapphire
802	buffer layer of GaN
803	n-type layer of n-type GaN
804	first cladding layer of n-type $Al_{0.07}Ga_{0.93}N$
805	first light guiding layer of GaN
806	multiple quantum well active layer
807	second light guiding layer of GaN
808	second cladding layer of p-type $Al_{0.07}Ga_{0.93}N$
809	contact layer of p-type GaN
810	ridge stripe
811	insulating film
812	p-side electrode
812	n-side electrode

[Name of Document] Abstract

[Abstract]

[Object] The device characteristics of a semiconductor light emitting diode are improved by suppressing quality degradation of an active layer and vapor phase intermediate reaction of materials in laminating a nitride semiconductor layer on a substrate.

[Means of Achieving the Object]

When nitride semiconductor layers are laminated on a substrate, the growth ambient pressure is changed to increased pressure higher than an atmospheric pressure in growing an active layer of GaInN and is changed to reduced pressure lower than the atmospheric pressure in growing p-type AlGaN and p-type GaN. In so doing, quality degradation of the active layer, which is due to defects of holes and the like, is suppressed and vapor phase intermediate reaction of TMA, Cp₂Mg and NH₃ is suppressed to increase the efficiency of material supply, thereby improving crystal quality of the nitride semiconductor device.

[Selected Drawing] FIG. 1

Fig. 1

(a)

104 cladding layer of n-type Al_{0.1}Ga_{0.9}N

106 n-type layer of n-type Al_{0.2}Ga_{0.8}N

105 light guiding layer of n-type GaN

103 contact layer of n-type GaN

102 buffer layer

101 substrate of sapphire

(b)

108 active layer

n-type layer of n-type GaN

(c)

111 cladding layer of p-type Al_{0.1}Ga_{0.9}N

112 contact layer of p-type GaN

110 light guiding layer of p-type GaN

109 evaporation suppressing layer of p-type AlGaN

FIG. 2 209 rotary pump 207 pressure gauge 205 material gas supplying nozzle 208 conductance valve 206 reaction chamber sub flow gas group III material group V material 202 heater 204 susceptor 201 heater pair 210 exhaust bus processing system 203 substrate FIG. 3 302 p-side electrode 303 n-side electrode FIG. 4 (a) growth rate of AlGaN pressure (b)

pressure

concentration of Mg in GaN

(c)

concentration of Mg in AlGaN

FIG. 5

Growth rate

total flow rate: 20 to 40 slm

total flow rate: exceeding 40 slm

number of times of growth

FIG.6

604 cladding layer of n-type AlGaN
603 n-type layer of n-type AlGaN

601 substrate of sapphire

602 ridge stripe of GaN

FIG. 7

606 multiple quantum well active layer of InGaN/InGaN

610 contact layer of p-type GaN

609 cladding layer of p-type Al_{0.07}Ga_{0.93}N

608 guiding layer of p-type GaN

611 anode

607 evaporation suppressing layer of p-type Al_{0.1}Ga_{0.9}N

613 insulating film

605 guiding layer of n-type GaN

604 cladding layer of n-type AlGaN

612 cathode

602 ridge strip of GaN

603 n-type layer of n-type AlGaN

601 substrate of sapphire

FIG. 8

810 ridge strip

809 contact layer of p-type GaN

811 insulating film

808 second cladding layer of p-type AlGaN

812 p-side electrode

807 second light guiding layer of GaN

806 multiple quantum well active layer

805 first light guiding layer of GaN

804 first cladding layer of n-type AlGaN

813 n-side electrode

803 n-type layer of n-type GaN

802 buffer layer of GaN

801 substrate of sapphire

特許・実用新案出願依頼書

事業場控え

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*** 連絡書 ***

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依頼種別

特許

依頼番号

H11-1012

プロジェクトNO 1:RBF11 2:

3:

出願分類

通常

発明の名称

窒化物半導体素子の製造方法

要約

大気圧以上と以下の圧力切り替えにより結晶品質を向上

させることを特徴とする窒化物系の気相成長法。

請求項数

10

発明数

6

発明番号

1,2,6,7,8,10

出願希望日

理由:

公表日

同時審査請求

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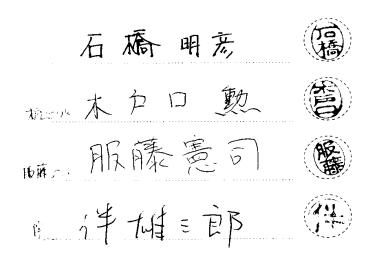


譲渡証

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下記の発明・考案または物品に関して、特許を受ける権利あるいは実用新案または意匠の登録を受ける権利を貴社に譲渡いたします

記

発明・考案の名称または意匠に係る物品

歪比物学等件素子の製造方法







H11-1012





【書類名】 明細書

【発明の名称】 窒化物半導体素子の製造方法

【特許請求の範囲】

【請求項1】基板上に窒化物半導体層を積層して窒化物半導体素子を作製する方法であって、該窒化物 半導体層を積層する工程のいずれかの間に第一の成長雰囲気圧力から第二の成長雰囲気圧力へ変更する 工程とを有することを特徴とする窒化物半導体素子の製造方法。

【請求項2】第一の成長雰囲気圧力が大気圧以下で第二の成長雰囲気圧力が大気圧以上、または第二の成長雰囲気圧力が大気圧以上で第二の成長雰囲気圧力が大気圧以下であることを特徴とする請求項 1 に記載の窒化物半導体素子の製造方法。

【請求項3】 大気圧以上の圧力で成長する窒化物半導体層に In を含むことを特徴とする請求項 2 に記載の窒化物半導体素子の製造方法。

【請求項 4】 大気圧以下の圧力で成長する窒化物半導体層に少なくとも AI または Mg を含むことを特徴とする請求項 2 に記載の窒化物半導体素子の製造方法。

【請求項 5】 活性領域が半導体発光素子の活性層であって、量子井戸から成ることを特徴とする請求項 1から3に記載の窒化物半導体素子。

【請求項 6】基板上に窒化物半導体層を積層して窒化物半導体素子を作製する方法であって、窒化物半導体層上に選択的にマスクされた基板または選択的に窒化物半導体の種結晶を備えた基板上に第一の雰囲気圧力において窒化物半導体層を堆積する工程と、該基板の上部に第二の雰囲気圧力において窒化物半導体層を堆積する工程とを備えることを特徴とする窒化物半導体素子の製造方法。

【請求項 7】第一の成長雰囲気圧力が大気圧以下であることを特徴とする請求項 1 に記載の窒化物半導体素子の製造方法。

【請求項 8】窒化物半導体層上に選択的にマスクされた基板または選択的に窒化物半導体の種結晶を備えた基板上に第一の温度において窒化物半導体層を堆積する工程と、該基板の上部に第二の温度において窒化物半導体層を堆積する工程とを備えることを特徴とする請求項 4 に記載の窒化物半導体素子の製造方法。

【請求項 9】第二の温度を第一の温度よりも高くすることを持徴とする請求項 6 に記載の窒化物半導体素子の製造方法。

【請求項 10】選択的に種結晶を備えた基板上に堆積する窒化物半導体層が AlGaN (1≥Al>0) であることを特徴とする請求項6に記載の窒化物半導体素子の製造方法。

【発明の属する技術分野】

本発明は光情報処理分野などへの応用が期待されている半導体レーザなどの GaN 系半導体発光素子および製造方法に関するものである。

【従来の技術】

V 族元素に窒素(N)を有する窒化物半導体は、そのバンドギャッフの大きさから、短波長発光素子の材料として有望視されている。中でも窒化ガリウム系化合物半導体(GaN 系半導体:AlxGayInzN(0 \leq x、y、 $z\leq$ 1、x+y+z=1))は研究が盛んに行われ、青色発光ダイオード(LED)、緑色 LED が実用化されている。また、光ディスク装置の大容量化のために、400nm 帯に発振波長を有する半導体レーザが熱望されており、GaN 系半導体を材料とする半導体レーザが注目され現在では実用レベルに達している。

図 8 はレーザ発振が達成されている GaN 系半導体レーザの構造断面図である。サファイア基板 801 上に有機金属気相成長法(MOVPE 法)により GaN バッファ層 802、n-GaN 層 803、n-Al0.07Ga0.93N 第 1 クラッド層 804、n-GaN 第 1 光ガイド層 805、Ga1-xInxN/Ga1-yInyN (0<y<x<1)から成る多重量子井戸活性層 806、p-GaN 第 2 光ガイド層 807、p- Al0.07Ga0.93N 第 2 クラッド層 808、p-GaN コンタクト層 809 が成長される。そして p-GaN コンタクト層 809 上に幅 3 から 10 ミクロン程度の幅のリッジストライブ 810 が形成され、その両側は絶縁膜 811 によって埋め込まれる。その後リッジストライプ 810 および絶縁膜 811 上に例えば Ni/Au から成る p 電極 812、また一部を n-GaN 層 803 が露出するまでエッチングした表面に例えば Ti/Al から成る n 電極 813 が形成される。本素子において n 電極 813 を接地し、p 電極 812 に電圧を印可すると、多重量子井戸活性層 806 に向かって p 電極 812 側からホールが、また n 電極 813 側から電子が注入され、前記多重量子井戸活性層 806 内で光学利得を生じ、発振波長 400nm 帯のレーザ発振を起こす。多重量子井戸活性層 806 の材料である Ga1-xInxN/Ga1-yInyN 薄膜の組成や膜厚によって発振波長は変化する。現在室温以上での連続発振が実現されている。

MOVPE 法を用いて GaInN を成長させる際には、成長温度を 800℃程度とし、またキャリアガスとして窒素を用いることが望ましい(アプライド・フィジクス・レターズ(Applied Physics Letters)、第 59 巻、p. 2251、1991 年)。これに対し、AI0.07Ga0.93N クラッド層や GaN 光ガイド層などの成長温度は高く(>1000℃)またキャリアガスも水素を用いることが一般的である。成長の際の一連のプロセスは、例えば特開平 6-196757 や特開平 6-177423 に開示されている。サファイア基板 801 を水素を流しながら 1050℃で熱処理し、続いて温度を 510℃まで下げ反応ガスのアンモニア(NH3)とトリメチルガリウム(TMG)を流して GaN バッファ層 802 を堆積する。 GaN バッファ層 802 成長後、TMG の供給を停止し、1030℃まで昇温させ、水素ガスをキャリアガスとして、TMG、モノシラン(SiII4)を供給して n-GaN 層や n-AlGaN(AlGaN の場合、III 族原料ガスはトリメチルアルミニウム(TMA)、TMG)を成長させる。その後、原料ガスの供給を止め、温度を 800℃にしてキャリアガスを窒素に切り替え、III 族原料ガスとしてトリメチルインジウム(TMI)と TMG を供給して Ga1-xInxN/Ga1-yInyN 薄膜(多重量子井戸活性層 706)を成長させる。多重量子井戸活性層 806 成長後、III 族原料ガスの供給を止め、再び温度を 1020℃として TMG、TMA、シクロペンタジエニルマグネシウム(Cp2Mg)等を供給してp-AlGaN 層や p-GaN 層を成長させる。Ga1-xInxN/Ga1-yInyN 薄膜成長後の 1020℃への昇温の際の

保護膜として、GaN 層(特開平 9-186363)や Al0.2Ga0.8N 層(例えば、ジャパニーズ・ジャーナル・オブ・アブライド・フィジクス(Japanese Journal of Applied Physics)、第 35 巻、p. L74、1996年)を堆積する場合がある。気相成長時における雰囲気の圧力は通常、減圧、大気圧、あるいは $1\sim1.5$ atm 程度の加圧状態が用いられている。

また、最近サファイア基板上に選択成長等の手段を用いて GaN を成長し基板と GaN の界面に発生する欠陥を抑制する手法が試みられており、特に減圧下での気相成長法により平坦で高品質な GaN が得られることが報告されている。

【発明が解決しようとする課題】

この材料系の成長の際の特徴は、In を含有する層(即ち多重量子井戸活性層 806)と In を含有しない層(GaN や AlGaN)のキャリアガスが異なることである。前者の成長の際には窒素を用い、後者の場合は水素を用いることが一般的である。半導体レーザの作製など多層膜を積層する際にはキャリアガスを途中で切り替える必要がある。また、同時にウエハの温度も変えている。キャリアガス切り替えの際にはIII 族ガスの供給は停止しており、ウエハは結晶成長を行っていない平衡状態に置かれていると言える。平衡状態において、1000℃程度の高温や 1 気圧以下の圧力では、成長した膜からの構成元素の脱離(再蒸発)を生じる恐れがある。特に、多重量子井戸活性層 806 成長前の下地の n-GaN や n-AlGaN (特開平 6-196757 や特開平 6-177-123 においては Al 組成は 0.1)の品質の劣化は、多重量子井戸活性層 706 の品質の低下を引き起こし、発光ダイオードや半導体レーザの発光効率の低下、しきい値電流の増大などの弊害を引き起こす。

また、気相成長の際に大気圧以上の圧力で成長を行うと原料ガスの濃度が高まり TMA 及び Cp2Mg が NH3 ガスと気相反応して基板に原料が効率的に供給できず、成長レートが極端に低下したり、p 型ドーパントである Mg が添加されない等の問題が生じる。また、この問題を回避するために原料のキャリアガス流量を増加させて流速を速める等の方法を用いると大量のガスが反応管に流れ渦や対流等が生じて安定な条件で成長ができない等の問題が生じる。

従って、本発明は上記の事情を鑑みてなされたものであり、窒化物半導体素子の活性領域やその周辺の結晶品質の向上更には欠陥の低減により、特性の優れた窒化物半導体素子を提供するものである。特に発光素子の発光効率の向上を可能とする。

【課題を解決するための手段】

本発明の窒化物半導体素子の製造方法は、基板上に窒化物半導体層を積層して窒化物半導体素子を作製する方法であって、該窒化物半導体層を積層する工程のいずれかの間に第一の成長雰囲気圧力から第二の成長雰囲気圧力へ変更する工程を有することを特徴とする。各層の成長に適切な雰囲気圧力にすることにより、転位の低減、ドーピングの効率化、活性層結晶の高品質化を行うことができる。特に、少

なくとも In を含有する活性層を大気圧以上の加圧状態で成長し、他の層を減圧下で成長することにより、 原料ガスの供給流量を高めることなしに気相中における原料同士の中間反応を抑制でき、効率的で安定 に窒化物半導体素子構造の結晶成長が可能となる。

また、本発明の窒化物半導体素子の製造方法は、In を含有する活性層と In を含有しない窒化物半導体層を第一の雰囲気圧力において堆積する工程と、該 In を含有しない窒化物半導体層を堆積した後、第二の雰囲気圧力に切り換える工程とを備えることを特徴とする。

また、本発明の窒化物半導体素子の製造方法は、窒化物半導体層上に選択的にマスクされた基板または選択的に窒化物半導体の種結晶を備えた基板上に第一の雰囲気圧力において窒化物半導体層を堆積する工程と、該基板の上部に第二の雰囲気圧力において窒化物半導体層を堆積する工程とを備えることを特徴とする。特に第一の雰囲気圧力は減圧下において行うと窒化物半導体層の横方向の成長が促進されマスク上と合わせて基板全面に平坦な窒化物半導体層が形成され、第二の雰囲気圧力を減圧から大気圧以上の加圧の範囲で適切に切り換えることにより、低欠陥な下地の窒化物半導体層上に高品質な窒化物半導体素子の形成が可能となる。

また、本発明の窒化物半導体素子の製造方法は、窒化物半導体層上に選択的にマスクされた基板または選択的に窒化物半導体の種結晶を備えた基板上に第一の温度において窒化物半導体層を堆積する工程と、該基板の上部に第二の温度において窒化物半導体層を堆積する工程とを備えることを特徴とする。特に、第二の温度を第一の温度よりも高くすることにより、平坦で低欠陥な下地の窒化物半導体層上により配向性の高い高品質な窒化物半導体素子の形成が可能となる。

【発明の実施の形態】

以下、本発明の実施の形態について図面を用いて詳細に説明する。本発明の製造方法は、窒化物半導体の成長方法は有機金属気相成長法(MOVPE)法に限定するものではなく、ハイドライド気相成長法 (H-VPE 法) や分子線エピタキシー法 (MBE 法) など、窒化物半導体層を成長させるためにこれまで提案されている全ての方法に適用できる。

(実施の形態1)

図1は第1の実施例を示す GaN 系半導体レーザの製造方法を工程順に示した構造断面図である。

図 1 (a)において、MOVPE 法によりサファイア基板 101 上に 500℃で TMG と NH3 とを供給してバッファ層 102 を堆積する。その後、1020℃まで昇温させ、TMG、SiH4、TMA 等を供給して n-GaN コンタクト層 103、n-Al0.1Ga0.9N クラッド層 104、n-GaN 光ガイド層 105、n-Al0.2Ga0.8N 層 106 を成長させる。この間のキャリアガスは主に水素であり、成長圧力は約 300Torr(約 0.4 気圧)である。その後、III 族原料ガスの供給を止め、圧力を 840Torr に、温度を 780℃にしてキャリアガスを窒素に切り替え、図 2(b)に示すように TMG と SiH4 を供給して n-GaN 層 107、TMI と TMG を供給して活性層 108 を成長させる。活性層 108 の成長後、図 1(c)のように温度を 1020℃まで昇温しながら TMG、TMA、

Cp2Mg 等を供給して p-AlGaN 活性層蒸発抑制層 109 を成長した後、III 族原料ガスの供給を停止して、圧力を再び 400Torr に切り替え、p-GaN 光ガイド層 110、p-Al0.1Ga0.9N クラッド層 111、p-GaN コンタクト層 112 を成長させる。活性層 108 は AlGaInN 系多重量子井戸で構成されており、本実施例では 3nm 厚の In0.09Ga0.91N 井戸層と 6nm 厚の In0.0.1Ga0.91N 障壁層が 3 周期構成されている多重量子井戸構造を用いた。また、活性層 108 には Si 等のドーハントが添加されていても構わない。780℃におけるキャリアガスは不活性ガスであるアルゴン等でも良い。更に、基板はサファイア以外にも SiC、Si でも構わない。

図 2 は前記圧力可変型 MOVPE 装置の概念図である。原料はステンレスや石英等を用いて III 族及び V 族原料をそれぞれ独立に供給し、基板 203 直前で混合する。対流等による基板上でのガスの舞い上が りを抑制するために、窒素、水素、アルゴン等の不活性ガスをサブフローガスとして原料ガスと平行に 流す。基板加熱は熱電対 201 を用いてヒーター 202 で加熱する。排気系はロータリーポンプ 209 と反応管 206 の間に開閉度を調節できるコンダクタンスバルプ 208 を挿入し、反応管 206 の圧力をモニターする圧力計 207 と連動させて、開閉度を調整する等して、減圧から大気圧、さらには数気圧程度の加圧雰囲気に保つことができる。

これらの結晶成長後、図 3 の GaN 系半導体レーザの素子断面図に示すように、p-GaN コンタクト層 112 および p-Al0.1Ga0.9N クラッド層 111 を 5 ミクロン程度の幅のリッジストライプ状に加工し、その両側を SiO2 301 によって埋め込む。その後 p-GaN コンタクト層 112 上に p 側電極 302 を形成し、また n-GaN コンタクト層 103 の一部が露出するまでエッチングを行った表面に n 側電極 303 が形成される。本素子において n 側電極 303 と p 側電極 302 の間に電圧を印可すると、活性層 108 に向かって p 側電極 302 側からホールが、また n 側電極 303 側から電子が注入され、活性層 108 内で光学利得を生じ、405nm の波長でレーザ発振を起こす。

次に、圧力可変型 MOVPE 法の有効性について説明する。

図 4(a)は AlGaN の成長レートと雰囲気圧力との関係である。圧力が高くなるに従いレートが極端に減少することがわかった。同様に、図 4(b)に示すように p 型 GaN 中の Mg 濃度の成長圧力依存性から圧力上昇と共に Mg の取り込まれが激減することがわかった。これらの現象は圧力を上昇すると気相中において原料同士の衝突確率的が増大し、特に TMA と NH3、または Cp2Mg と NH3 とが中間反応を起こしやすいために基板上に原料が効率的に供給できなくなることが原因と考えられる。図 4(c)に AlGaN 中 Mg 濃度の成長圧力依存性を示す。圧力の上昇と共に Mg の取り込まれが GaN 以上に激減することがわかった。従って p-AlGaN の成長には減圧雰囲気下が有効であることがわかる。

一方 In を含む AlInGaN 系の成長では、InN の蒸気圧が高いために窒素抜けによる欠陥を抑制するために、低温で成長するか圧力を上げて蒸発を抑制することが有効と考えられる。そのため従来は大気圧下での常圧 MOVPE 法の成長手法が大半で、時に加圧 MOVPE 法の手法もとられていた。しかしながら何れの成長も圧力は常に一定であり、上記のように AlInGaN 系活性層の高品質性を保ちかつその後に続

く p-GaN 及び p-AlGaN の成長の際に気相中での中間反応抑制を考慮した圧力切り替えの手法は開示されていない。

840Torr の加圧成長において中間反応を抑制するために、原料ガス濃度を薄めて原料同士の衝突確率 を低減させる目的で、III 族原料のキャリアガスである水素や窒素の流量を増大させて成長を行った。図 5 に示すように気相中間反応が起こるトータル流量が 40slm 程度では GaN の成長レートは成長回数を重ねてもほぼ一定で安定なのに対し、それ以上の流量になると流速が速くなり過ぎて原料の熱分解効率が低下してレートが減少したり、渦の発生やほんの少しの反応生成物でガスの流れが変わる等、不安定なガス流となって成長レートが成長回数を重ねる度に安定しなくなるという問題が発生することを見いだした。

そこで、本発明のように圧力可変型 MOVPE 法を用いることにより、In を含む活性層は圧力を高めて 窒素抜け等の欠陥が少なく、他は減圧成長することにより気相中間反応を抑制できるので、安定でかつ 高効率に窒化物半導体素子の結晶成長を行えることが可能となった。

In 系の活性層を成長した後、p 型の GaN ガイド層や AlGaN クラッド層を活性層よりも高温かつ減圧で成長する前に、p 型 AlGaN を圧力は活性層と同じ加圧のまま成長しながら活性層の成長温度から昇温する目的は、昇温により活性層の InN が分解して品質を低下させることを抑制するためであり、成長レートを 1nm/分程度に十分遅くすれば、活性層蒸発抑制層としての機能を十分にはたせる Mg ドープの p 型 AlGaN が成長できる In を含む活性層を p-AlGaN で覆いつくせば、ここで雰囲気圧力を加圧から減圧に、またキャリアガス種を窒素から水素に切り替えても活性層に何らのダメージも与えることもない。

本発明の製造方法に従って加圧成長によりデバイスを作製した結果、半導体レーザのしきい値電流が 約1/2 に大きく低減できた。

本発明では活性層を加圧に、他の層は減圧にする場合で説明したが、p型 GaN 及び p型 AlGaN を除く他の層では大気圧と同等以上の圧力で成長しても良い。これは気相中間反応の影響がほとんど無いためである。また圧力の切り替え時は本実施例のように必ずしも成長中断を行う必要はなく、III 族原料の供給を低減させる等して成長レートを下げ連続的に成長を行ってもよい。

本発明では、GaN 系半導体レーザを例に取って説明したが、発光ダイオードや電子デバイス等の活性 領域を成長させる際にも本発明の効果は大きいことは言うまでもない。発光ダイオードでは発光効率を 向上させることができる。また、電子デバイスではキャリアの移動度が大きく向上する。

(実施の形態2)

実施の形態1では活性層の結晶品質を向上と原料の気相中間反応を抑制するために、活性層周辺において圧力を成長中に変化させる方法について説明した。ここでは、活性層の品質を向上させるためのも う一つの方法について述べる。

図 6 に示すようにサファイア基板 601 上に選択的に GaN リッジストライプ 602 を形成し、GaN リッ

燐酸/硫酸系のエッチャントを用いてエッチピット密度を観察すると、通常のようにサファイア上に成長した n-AIGaN に比べて約 2 桁程度、表面全体にわたり欠陥が低減されていることを確認した。なお、本発明では基板はサファイアで説明したが、基板はサファイア以外にも SiC、Si でも構わない。また、GaNリッジストライプは AI や In を含んでいても AIGaN 層の種結晶になり得るので構わない。

次に実施例 1 と同様に、n-GaN ガイド層 605、InGaN/InGaN 多重量子井戸活性層 606、p-AlGaN 蒸発抑制層 607、p-GaN ガイド層 608、p-AlGaN クラッド層 609、p-GaN コンタクト層 610 を順次成長し、p 型層にリッジを形成して絶縁膜 613 で電流狭窄を行う。最後に陽電極 611、陰電極 612 を形成する。成長圧力は実施例 1 と同様に InGaN/InGaN 多重量子井戸活性層 606 の成長直前に 8-40Torr に切り替え、p-AlGaN 蒸発抑制層 607 の成長後、再び減圧 -100Torr に切り替える。

本実施例では活性層を加圧に、他の層は減圧にする場合で説明したが、実施例 1 と同様に p 型 GaN 及び p 型 AlGaN を除く他の層では大気圧と同等以上の圧力で成長しても良い。

本発明のように、成長圧力を減圧と加圧との間で切り替えることにより、低欠陥密度の n-AlGaN クラッド層上に高品質な InGaN 系多重量子井戸を作製でき、かつ気相中間反応を抑制して効率的、安定に P-AlGaN、p-GaN 層を成長させることが可能となった。

本発明の製造方法に従って加圧成長によりデバイスを作製した結果、半導体レーザのしきい値電流が 約 1/2 に大きく低減でき、またデバイス寿命も室温において連続動作で 1 万時間以上可能となり飛躍的 な特性の向上が見られた。

本発明では、GaN 系半導体レーザを例に取って説明したが、発光ダイオードや電子デバイス等の活性 領域を成長させる際にも本発明の効果は大きいことは言うまでもない。発光ダイオードでは発光効率を 向上させることができる。また、電子デバイスではキャリアの移動度が大きく向上する。

【発明の効果】

以上説明したように、本発明の窒化物半導体素子の製造方法は、In を含有する活性層を加圧で、Al、Mg を含有する層を減圧雰囲気で積層させることで、活性層の結晶品質を大きく向上させかつ p 型層を成長する際に原料効率の低下や成長レートの不安定化を招く気相中間反応を回避することができるので、

発光ダイオード、半導体レーザ等のデバイス特性を向上させることができる。

また、本発明の窒化物半導体素子の製造方法は、GaN リッジストライフを有した基板を用いて成長圧力を減圧と加圧との間で切り替えることにより選択成長で低欠陥な AlGaN 層上に高品質な In を含有する活性層を形成できるので、発光ダイオード、半導体レーザ等のデバイス特性を向上させることができる。

【図面の簡単な説明】

- 図1 本発明の第1の実施の形態を示す GaN 系半導体レーザの製造方法を工程順に示した構造断面図。
- 図2 本発明の第1及び第2の実施の形態に用いる気相成長装置の概念図。
- 図3 本発明の第1の実施の形態を示す GaN 系半導体レーザの素子断面図。
- 図4 本発明の第1及び第2の実施の形態における圧力切り替え効果を示す図。
- 図5 本発明の第1及び第2の実施の形態におけるトータル流量と成長レートの関係を示す図。
- 図6 本発明の第2の実施の形態を示す GaN 系半導体レーザの製造方法の1工程を示した構造断面図。
- 図7 本発明の第2の実施の形態を示す GaN 系半導体レーザの素子断面図。
- 図8 従来のGaN系量子井戸半導体レーザの素子断面図。

【符号の説明】

- 101 サファイア基板
- 102 バッファ層
- 103 n-GaN コンタクト層
- 104 n-Al0.1Ga0.9N クラッド層
- 105 n-GaN 光ガイド層
- 106 n-Al0.2Ga0.8N 層
- 107 n-GaN 層
- 108 活性層
- 109 p-AlGaN 蒸発抑制層
- 110 p-GaN 光ガイド層
- 111 p-Al0.1Ga0.9N クラッド層
- 112 p-GaN コンタクト層
- 201 熱電対
- 202 ヒーター
- 203 基板
- 204 サセプター

- 205 原料ガス供給ノズル
- 206 反応室
- 207 圧力計
- 208 コンダクタンスバルブ
- 209 ロータリーホンブ
- 210 排ガス処理装置
- 301 SiO2
- 302 p側電極
- 303 n 側電極
- 601 サファイア基板
- 602 GaN リッジストライブ
- 603 n-AlGaN層
- 604 n-AlGaN クラッド層
- 605 n-GaN ガイド層
- 606 InGaN/InGaN 多重量子井戸活性層
- 607 p-Al0.1Ga0.9N 蒸発抑制層
- 608 p-GaN ガイド層
- 609 p-Al0.07Ga0.9.3N クラッド層
- 610 p-GaN コンタクト層
- 611 陽電極
- 612 陰電極
- 613 絶縁膜
- 801 サファイア基板
- 802 GaN バッファ層
- 803 n-GaN層
- 804 n-Al0.07Ga0.93N 第1クラッド層
- 805 GaN 第1光ガイド層
- 806 多重量子井戸層活性層
- 807 GaN 第2光ガイド層
- 808 p-Al0.07Ga0.93N 第第2クラッド層
- 809 p-GaN コンタクト層
- 810 リッジストライプ
- 811 絶縁膜

- 812 p 電極
- 813 n 電極

【書類名】 要約書

【要約】

【目的】 基板上に窒化物半導体層を積層する際に活性層の品質の劣化及び原料の気相中間反応を抑制し、 半導体発光素子のデバイス特性を向上させる。

【解決手段】

基板上に窒化物半導体層を積層する際に、GaInN活性層成長時に圧力を大気圧以上の加圧に切り替え、 更に p-AlGaN、p-GaN 成長時に圧力を大気圧以下の減圧に切り替えることにより、空孔等の欠陥によ る活性層の品質劣化を抑制し、かつ TMA、Cp2Mg、NH3 の気相中間反応を抑制して原料の供給効率を 上げることができ、窒化物半導体デバイスの結晶品質を大きく向上させることができる。

【選択図】図1

